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READING NURSERY - - Reading, Mass.

ESTABLISHED 1854.

We cultivate the Clethra in the Nursery on all grades of soil from gravelly to sandy loam, where the original growth of the forest was oak, white and pitch-pine, as well as on black under-drained soil where it was cold and wet before draining; here a stronger growth is obtained and larger blossoms. We know of no objection to its success on slate or lime-stone soil. It is a native of this section of the State of Massachusetts, and is more generally found growing between swamp and upland, spreading freely into ploughed lands bordering on its natural thickets. It is a neat, upright growing shrub as an ornamental plant.—Its fragrance in a bouquet is as strong and enduring as the Lilium Auratum or the Tuberose. We predict its coming popularity so that no collection of shrubs will be complete without it.

Its abundance and lasting fragrance suggest its use for a new perfumery.

Following is an extract of a letter by Chas. Downing, the Horticulturist, whose opinion is of as much weight as that of any man in America:—

Newburg, N. Y., Feb. 24, 1879.

"The Clethra has always been a favorite shrub with me, flowering at a time when there are but few shrubs in bloom; the fragrance is delightful. It is not so much planted as it should be.—Chas. Downing."

CLETHRA ALNIFOLIA, or WHITE ALDER.

CLETHRA ALNIFOLIA.

We offered this shrub at first only as an ornamental plant worthy of every garden. It has been illustrated in our Catalogue since 1874, and this has served to disseminate a valuable but little noticed native plant to some extent.

It is now attracting attention as a forage for the *honey bee.* It is practical to plant for this purpose by the acre; it transplants safely, is propagated very easily by suckers and layers ; will grow on any soil, even if too wet for cultivation, and in any situation ; blossoms late and through a long season, from July 1st to Sept. Bees swarm upon it, apparently to the exclusion of other flowers

Miss Parsons, of Cape Ann, Mass. (where it grows naturally in the greatest perfection), n the winter of 1876, called the attention of the Editor of the American Bee Journal of Chicago to our illustration and description in these words,—"I never knew it 'o fail from any cause whatever * * * Cold appears never to harm it. *The honey is about whi.e, thick and of fine flavor.* I send you a picture of the Clethra Alnifolia, which is a correct and beautiful likeness, bringing the dew of honey before one; also a glowing description of the same." The editor, Mr. Thomas G. Newman, sent for the cut and printed it, with Miss Parsons's article and our "glowing" description, in the Feb. number, saying:

"This hardy flowering shrub is well illustrated by the excellent engraving on the opposite page which we have obtained from Mr. J. W. Manning, proprietor of the Reading, Mass., Nursery, of whom plants may be obtained. In Mr. M.'s catalogue we find the following description :—

"'Its leaves are light green; flowers are pure white, in spikes 3 to 6 inches long. A group of this Clethra in bloom will perfume the air for 20 rods around ; a handfull will fill a room with its delightful fragrance. It blooms from July 1st to September ; its cultivation is simple, growing to perfection where the lilac will succeed. It never fails to bloom after a hard winter. Its effect is impressive when grown in large masses, as produced by a dozen or more plants set in a group. It has never been so well shown to the public as in Central Park, New York.'"

We immediately received letters from all parts of the country, inquiring for culture, price, supply, etc.

Plant on any soil as above mentioned. We plant it here until May 15, and from Oct. to Dec. It leaves out late in spring, and blooms on plants 1 to 8 feet high, according to age and vigor of growth.

A strong plant in vigorous soil would make 100 plants by suckers alone in 3 years, and the planter of 1,000 can extend its culture to acres.

The only question is, can the bee-keeper afford to furnish his bees with additional forage in this sweetest of flowers, blooming as it does at a time when flowers are limited. We say, that planting the Clethra Alnifolia is not a doubtful experiment, and certainly not an expensive one.

An illustration of leaf and flower of Clethra is shown in Eng. Hort. Journals for March.

We are able to supply plants in quantity at the following prices : 6 to 12 inch layers by mail, post paid, $1 per doz.; $5 per 100. Small blooming plants, and strong layers, by mail, 6 for $1, $2 per doz. By express, layers and blooming plants, $5 per 100, $25 per 1,000.

JACOB W. MANNING,
Reading, Mass.

Observations from June 14th to Aug. 12th, 1880.

Our late trip was one of about 7,000 miles to the western shores of Lake Michigan, across Illinois and Missouri, with some delay at different points for more particular notice than a continued flying trip would allow. We passed the length of Kansas by A. T. & S. F. R.R. Crops in the eastern and middle part of the state were said to be excellent. Western Kansas and Eastern Colorado appeared to a disadvantage. No rain had fallen at Pueblo, Colorado, for ten and a half months. No weeds of this year's growth were to be seen about this old Mexican town, but 2 to 8 feet dried weed stalks of 1879 were numerous. The Mexicans had a system of irrigation here from the Arkansas River and also from the Fountain Creek, as shown by the ruined ditches, where Sege, Cactus, and Wild Melon grow now. Cottonwood trees 8 feet diameter were along the river. Willows flourished near streams, but few or no trees of any kind grow on the arid plains, unless helped by irrigation.

Yet trees and plants were seen most worthy to adorn our New England homes. Four species of Cactus were growing wild on the gravel ridges about Pueblo. The largest grower was the Sereus; it was 4 to 6 feet high, with abundance of dark purple flowers—this variety was seen south of the Divide between the Arkansas and Platt Rivers. The Wild Melon, a luxuriant runner 6 to 10 feet, with yellow blossoms and rich green leaves, grows in the driest soil. Spanish Bayonet or Yucca Augustafolia was common about the foot-hills and plains. A shrubby Spirea, with drab colored panicles of flower in lobes, that we had not seen in cultivation, was growing about the Rocky Mountain Cañons.

The Narrow or Willow leaved Cottonwood was growing in abundance along the mountain streams, also as a shade tree in Denver, made to thrive, as all trees are there, by irrigation. These and many other deciduous trees and shrubs, and quite a list of Perennial flowering roots, will be in our collection in 1881 and 1882. The Potentillas, Delpheneums Eqsetums, Mexican Soap Plant, Acquelenms, and many other hardy plants were very common, but it was too early for numerous flowers to be in bloom.

The Menzies Spruce (Picea Pungens), Douglas Spruce and Engleman Spruce, also a Balsam Fir, Picea Concoler, were seen growing to quite large trees, 2 to 5 feet diameter of trunk, 50 to 100 feet high, and 20 to 45 feet spread of branches. These and several varieties of Pines are all hardy, and have been introduced into Massachusetts; they are among our collections, most of them since 1872. Those now ready to disseminate are small or of moderate size; but time will develop them as rapidly as tree growth will admit. Gentlemen and Ladies having pleasure in trees and plants, will be enthusiastic for these new or uncommon trees, to extend the list of their conifers. The cones of these four Rocky Mountain Evergreens are quite distinct from our Spruce or White Pines.

At Manitou, where medical springs abound, and noted as a health resort, a real home-like place for the sick or well, just in the Foot Hills, is where the ascent of Pike's Peak is commenced, usually on horse back. Near the Iron Spring, Engleman Cañon, we saw a young Douglas Spruce, June 28th, that had new cones nearly grown, and a new growth of 18 inches, altitude 6,000 feet; three hours ride therefrom, at 11,000 to 12,000 feet, the Engleman Spruces and Pinus Flexilis had but just begun to swell their buds; near this point were trees 2 to 3 feet in diameter, 40 to 60 feet high. We spent the night at the U. S. Signal Station, at a height of 14,345 feet. The sun set, just as we arrived, beyond the snowy range; and arose on the morning of June 29 out of the plains of Kansas. No sleep for me that night; thermometer 30°; not much snow on the mountain, but ice in the "crater," which is a walled gully

towards the north, where a stone thrown was said to descend 7,500 feet before it would rest. It looked dangerous. We were in sight, in and out, of the mountains for some three weeks; walked 100 miles in four days, from July 9th to 13th; starting out from Georgetown at 8,000 feet altitude; passing over Argentine Pass at 13,006 feet; this is the highest wagon pass in the mountains; then over to the Pacific Slope, down Snake River, and out of that valley into the Atlantic Slope, by Hall's valley, thus passing the back bone or Range twice; thence down the South Platt Valley and Cañon on the way back to Denver. Returning east on the Denver & Rio Grand, A. T. & S. F. R.R. to Kansas City on my way to St. Louis and Chicago. On my way out not a corn tassel was in sight in Kansas; on the way back, after 25 days, not a stalk of corn was to be seen but had its full height 6 to 12 feet.

Our absence from Chicago, to Colorado, was four weeks. Wheat was all cut in northern Illinois July 18th. We crossed northern Illinois and southern Wisconsin; were in Iowa and Minnesota; passed by boat up the Mississippi to Lake City on Lake Pippin, by cars to St Paul and Minneapolis. July 30th was about the season of cutting wheat in central Minnesota, still later in northern Minnesota; to Duluth by cars; wheat not ripe July 31st. Thence by boat on Lake Superior; called at Prince Arthur's Landing, on the extreme northern shore of the Lake, at the head of Thunder Bay; called at Silver Islet; 600 miles by Lake brought us to the Sue St. Marie or falls; here is only twenty feet of waterfall. A famous new lock is nearly completed here to admit of a larger class of boats. Our course lay through Lake Huron and Georgian Bay to Collingwood. Nearly all this north shore for 900 miles was a wilderness of primeval forest; nature abounded here. The harvesting of oats, north of Georgian Bay, would not be done till August 25th; we passed this point August 4th. (As we passed Lancaster, Pennsylvania, June 15th, wheat was yellow, or fit to cut; the difference in harvesting wheat at the two extreme points, was fully nine weeks. At Chicago, June 18th, wheat was heading out. At Wauwatosa, Wisconsin, June 21st, neither oats or wheat was headed out by 6 to 10 days; rye was headed June 22d, wheat was harvesting at Springfield, Illinois. At St. Louis it was all cut; as it was all the way across Missouri and eastern Kansas on the 23d and 24th. At Denver, Colorado, July 4th, wheat was heading out.) Cars from Collingwood set us down at Toronto, 94 miles; by boat through Lake Ontario, the Thousand Islands, and rapids of the St. Lawrence River were passed; Montreal reached at dark, August 6th. Our route home was west of Lake Champlain, and through Lake George, Saratoga Springs, the Hudson River by day boat to New York City, and Long Island Sound by boat, and cars to Boston. Home reached August 12th.

We find relief after exacting labor, and knowledge gained by our numerous journeys to the Mississippi and beyond; but in this, some of the sources of the great river and the Lake systems were taken in. The forest growth all along the northern shore of the upper lakes, and down the St. Lawrence, was very much like that of New England. It was noticed that no White Pines along the whole route had any cones of this year's growth, but, whenever the tree was seen, the dried cones of 1879 were yet on the trees more or less. It does not bear seed freely, only once in 3 or 4 years.

The Catalogue of the Reading Nursery, is written out from our actual experience and observation of a class of Fruits, Ornamental Trees, Shrubs, Evergreens, Roses, &c., with a long list of Herbaceous or Perennial Flowering Roots; all hardy and adapted to our climate.

We find by experience, and large losses, that many beautiful trees and shrubs that are hardy or tolerable in the middle states, or even at western New York, or in south western Ontario, are not hardy in eastern Massachusetts, or north eastern New England.

Customers who will allow us some discretion in the selection of their orders, will be gainers.

The Descriptive Catalogue, of 76 pages, is illustrated, and contains great information.—If you desire it, enclose 10 cents in stamps, and receive it by mail.

JACOB W. MANNING,
Reading, Mass.